**Lowering the retirement age of workers in the FCI**

508. SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA
SHRI R.S. GAVAI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to drastically lower the retirement age for workers in the Food Corporation of India to 45 years from 60 years is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for lowering the retirement age;

(d) whether FCI workers union has been consulted in this regard; and

(e) if so, the views expressed by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (c) While considering the issue of organisational restructuring of the Food Corporation of India with specific reference to manpower management, Government has directed the Corporation to examine the matter regarding the age of retirement for its workers as per the Standing Orders, issued by the Ministry of Labour in this regard and discuss it with the workers Unions thereafter. Government is of the view that it would be in the overall interest of the workers as well as the Corporation if the retirement age of the workers could be brought down to around 45 years keeping in view the hazardous nature of work the workers are to perform.

(d) and (e) The FCI is yet to examine the matter. It has been instructed to examine the issue of reduction in age of labour separately and, thereafter, to discuss with the Unions. The FCI Workers Union in its representation of 27.6.2000 has, inter-alia, suggested that the FCI management, instead of adopting the measure of reducing the age of retirement to 45 years from 60 years, should concentrate in taking corrective steps like semi mechanisation of the work by installing fork, lift etc. and by reducing the work load norms

for handling of bags by a worker per day in keeping with the human capacity to reduce the hazards of the work.

**Supply of poor quality rice to Karnataka**

509. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH:
SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Karnataka Government has declared, for the first time, a rice war against the poor quality of rice supplied by Government to the State for disbursement through the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the what is the quantum of rice supplied and its cost;

(c) whether it is a fact that a couple of State Officials have been suspended for dereliction of duty and the State Government has threatened to sue the FCI for the poor quality of rice;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what steps are being taken against the erring Central Government officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The State Government of Karnataka had shown its reluctance for the acceptance of Rice procured under relaxed specification (URS rice). It had insisted for supply of uniform specification rice only.

(b) A quantity of 231520 Mts of rice was lifted by the Karnataka Government for PDS during the month of April, May and June 2000 @ Rs. 590/- per quintal for people Below Poaverty Line (BPL) and @ 1180/- per quintal for people Above Poverty Line (APL).

(c) Government of India is not aware about any such instance.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.